

MANAGING RAPID GROWTH WITH OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE
TOOLS

ABOUT WINDOW MART, INC. Window Mart is one of America's premier manufacturers of vinyl windows and doors. Headquartered in Royal, Arkansas, the company services a 20-state region and employs close to three hundred people. With a commitment to quality and customer service, Window Mart has sold and installed more than four million windows since its inception in 1991. The company experienced significant growth over the past decade due to product quality and market demand. Since 2012, Window Mart has increased production from 500 units per day to 1,500 units per day, and increased payroll by over \$5 million.

THE CHALLENGE. Window Mart's rapid growth magnified certain issues that required urgent attention. Employees were now working 12 to 14 hours a day to complete orders. Meanwhile, material shortages with inventory control were increasing downtime, and Window Mart was losing the ability to track and correct defects. These issues limited the company's capacity to take on any new customers for about three years. The workforce was committed and working hard to meet the demands, but Window Mart needed to find a way to reduce overtime and waste, as well as gain better control over inventory and scheduling. Company leaders decided to reach out to the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) Manufacturing Solutions, part of the MEP National Network™, for assistance.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Manufacturing Solutions paid a visit to Window Mart and explained some of the Operational Excellence tools that could benefit the company, including Plant Layout, Lean Manufacturing, Training Within Industry (TWI), and Toyota Kata. Window Mart employees discovered how to implement these tools to improve production, reduce overtime and waste, and put the company on a path of continuous improvement and growth.

After adopting the recommended practices, the workforce maintained its engagement in continuous improvement efforts to overcome productivity challenges. As a result, the company experienced its largest sale/production quarter in history. The Operational Excellence tools positioned Window Mart to decrease overtime by a significant margin while almost doubling production. The company saved over one million dollars from waste reduction, along with additional cost savings from improved inventory and scheduling management.

"The transformation over the past year has been amazing. This would not have been possible without the help and training we have received from AEDC-Manufacturing Solutions. They have worked tirelessly with our supervisors and employees on all aspects of Lean and Kata solutions. Just coming off the largest sale/production quarter in the history of the company, this transformation couldn't have come at a better time for us to meet this kind of demand."

-Robert Tankersley, President

RESULTS



Increased production by almost **100%**



Decreased overtime by over **75%**



Saved over **\$1M** in waste reduction



Saved over **\$100k** in inventory and scheduling



Achieved largest sale/production quarter in the history of the company

CONTACT US



1 Commerce Way
Suite 601
Little Rock, AR 72202



(501)683-4411



www.mfgsolutions.org

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